

EPIDEMIOLOGY NEWS

Volume 3, Number 1

Department of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, UNC

Spring 1994

FROM THE CHAIR'S DESK

Over the past 10 years, the faculty, students and staff of the Department of Epidemiology have doubled in number. We now have 28 faculty, including 11 who are tenure-track assistant professors, four who have fixed term appointments, five associate professors, and eight full professors; two of these faculty members hold joint and primary appointments in the Department of Nutrition. Our student body numbers 146, of whom about 85 are in the doctoral program. We have a supporting staff of 40 persons. To give some indication of our rate of growth, in the 1986-87 academic year, the Department's annual budget was \$3.3 million, and in 1992-93 that figure was \$8.5 million, of which only 16% came from state funds. The point of these comparative numbers is to illustrate the striking change in the size of the Department, but also to note that because of sheer space limitations we have reached a plateau. The challenge now facing us as a Department is to grow in quality while we consolidate in quantity. Part of this challenge is to avoid remaining the same in what we do even while we remain the same in numbers and people, because our society is changing, and what epidemiology offers must change also. The most successful companies avoid rigidity in their patterns of operation by staying in touch with and being responsive to the wants of their customers. Our "customers" are both our students and the public health community. We get feedback from our students through course evaluations, student-faculty retreats, and individual meetings. But the feedback from the public health community is at best indirect and distant. I want to fill this gap by creating an external advisory committee, consisting of persons who are actively involved in the practice or the use of epidemiology. We need outside advice on whether we are meeting the needs of the public health community - whether our teaching and research are addressing the issues of public health importance, and whether we can improve on our contributions. We can also benefit by feedback from our alumni and alumnae, and we would like your suggestions on how we might accomplish this.

Carl M. Shy, M.D., Dr. P.H.

NEWS FROM THE INFORMATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE

Work continues on adding departmental staff and faculty to the School of Public Health network with two new connections made recently. Networking is now completed in Suite 2105, with the exception of one person and Suite 2107, with the exception of two persons. The next suite scheduled to be connected is Suite 2104. The latest departmental Hewlett

Packard Unix Workstation has been brought up and is operational. This workstation is located in McGavran-Greenberg with 32 megabytes of memory and one gigabyte of storage. Following the installation of software and internet connections user accounts will be added. See Wayne Rosamond for more information.

As a reminder for computing service requests, please continue to use the established form which can be obtained from Lesa McPherson.

Wayne Rosamond, Ph.D.
Chair, Information Systems
Committee

CHANGES IN THE EPIDEMIOLOGY SUPPORT STAFF

Since our last publication, the department has three new staff members. **Boyd Yount** has joined our staff as a research technician for Dr. Ralph Baric. You will be able to find him over in Dr. Baric's laboratory which is located in room 243 Rosenau. **Stephanie Watkins**, computer programmer, left the department and **Ans Janssens** has joined us and is working with Dr. Jim Thomas, STEP, and Dr. Lenore Kohlmeier. She is located in Suite 32 at Nations Bank Plaza. **Charlmayne Alston**, Social Research Assistant for the STEP project at the Wilson County Health Department, has left and they are in the process of finding a replacement for this position. **Catherine VanDoren**, Staff Clinic Nurse for Dr. Andy Olshan, is the newest member of our staff. You will see her occasionally here meeting with Andy; however, her primary location is over in the hospital in the ENT clinic.

IN THE NEWS

The School of Public Health Public Relations Office provides the department with reports of UNC Epidemiology faculty, staff, and students making the news. Listed in this section are highlines of newsclippings.

For Many Patients, Following Doctor's Orders is Difficult. *HERALD-SUN*. Durham, NC; 8-5-93. [Carey, T. Adjunct]

SPORE Grant Aims to Reduce Breast Cancer Mortality. *WILSON DAILY TIMES*. Wilson, NC; 6/25/93. [Hulka B, Liu E and Newman B. Faculty]

IN THE NEWS (Continued)

Heart Disease Study Says Men at High Risk. JOURNAL PATRIOT. North Wilkesboro, NC; 7/15/93. [Tyroler, H.A. Faculty.]

Study Shows Differences in Risk of Heart Death. THE PILOT. Southern Pines; 7/12/93. [Tyroler, H.A. Faculty]

Geriatric Program Reaches Rural Areas. THE PILOT. Southern Pines, NC; 7/5/93. [Williams, M. Adjunct]

If you are interested in viewing any of these articles, see Lesa McPherson (2107D) and please feel free to send news directly to her.

1994 FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

Ananth CV, Savitz DA. Vaginal bleeding and adverse reproductive outcomes: a meta-analysis. Paediatr and Perinat Epidemiol, 1994; 8:62-78.

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Kaplan BH, Munroe-Blum H, Blazer DG. "Religion, Health, and Forgiveness," in Religious Factors in Aging and Health, edited by Jeffrey Levin. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1994.

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Olshan A. Reproductive Effects, Chapter 9, In: Veterans and Agent Orange. Health Effects of Herbicides Used in Vietnam. National Academy Press, 1994.

Rowland AS, Baird DD, Weinberg CR, Shore DL, Shy CM and Wilcox AJ. The effect of occupational exposure to mercury vapour on the fertility of female dental assistants. Occup Environ Med 1994; 51:28-34.

Runyan CW, Loomis DP, Butts JD. Practices of county medical examiners in classifying deaths as on the job. J Occup Med 1994;36:36-41.

Savitz DA, Boyle CA, Holmgren P. Prevalence of depression among electrical workers. Am J Ind Med 1994; 25:165-76.

Savitz DA, Sonnenfeld N, Olshan A. Review of epidemiologic studies of paternal exposure and spontaneous abortion. Am J Ind Med 1994; 25:361-383.

Schmitz J, Gertis KS, Mauney C, Stamm, LV, Folds, JD. Laboratory diagnosis of congenital syphilis by IgM and IgA Western blotting. Clin Diag Lab Immunol 1994; 1:32-37.

Stamm LV, Parrish EA. Characterization of the low molecular mass proteins of virulent Treponema pallidum. Infect Immun 1994; 62:271-279.

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West SL, Strom BL, Freundlich B, Normand E, Koch G, Savitz DA. Completeness of prescription recording in outpatient medical records. J Clin Epidem 1994; 47:165-71.

STUDENT NEWS

Grants Awarded

Kimberly Phillips has been selected to receive one of the Oncology Nursing Foundation/Wyeth-Ayerst new Investigators Research Grants for the 1994-95 year.

Doug Smucker has been awarded one of five HPDP mini-grants. This money will be used to extend active STD surveillance work to other counties.

Gold at the End of the Rainbow

Congratulations to the December Epidemiology graduates:

PhD	MSPH
Glinda Cooper	Lisa Donato
Lucy Peipins	Sheryl Parker
Trish Moorman	Christina Stovall
Neal Simonson	Joanna Whyte
Florencia Vargas-Vorackova	
Doug Watson	MPH
	Jeffrey Sonis
	Paul Beckerer

Scientific Committee Selection

We are pleased to congratulate **Daphne Rattner** who has been selected to be a member of the scientific committee for the 3rd Latin-American Congress on the Social Sciences and Medicine. This meeting will be held April 9-13, 1995 in San Paulo, Brazil.

ESO NEWS

During ESO meetings last semester, students decided that this year, the student organization would focus on peer counseling. The wisdom and experiences of senior students can help make the graduate experience of newer students run more smoothly. So far two sessions have been held. The first, in January, focused on preparation for the doctoral qualifying exam. During the second session in early March, a panel of doctoral students offered advice on choosing a doctoral committee and on preparing for the oral defense of a dissertation proposal. We are hopeful that this will be a continuing tradition. Thank you to all who participated.

Student Sponsored Events

ESO Ice Cream (ISCREAM) Social

The Epidemiology Student Organization is sponsoring an Ice Cream Social on Wednesday, April 21, 1994 at 3:00 pm. This will be held in the Epidemiology Student Room and they are asking folks to please bring your own mug and spoon.

ESO Student to Student: How to Survive the Doctoral Qualifying Exam

The ESO is sponsoring a seminar on "surviving the doctoral qualifying exam" on Wednesday, April 20, 1994 at 12:00 noon in the Epidemiology Conference Room (2101G McG-G).

POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWS

The post-doctoral fellows are a group that we may not hear very much about. We are pleased to introduce four members of this group.

Eric Whitsel is a graduate of the University of North Carolina, School of Medicine. He is a National, Heart, Lung and Blood Institute Fellow in the masters program. Eric is working with data from the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities Project pursuing his interests in autonomic function, the QT interval of the electrocardiogram, and painless myocardial infarction.

Sandra Thomas received her undergraduate degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in biology. She worked in a biology laboratory as an upperclassman, trying to isolate a regulatory protein in bacteria. She continued her education at the Ohio State University Medical School and received her MD. Her research interests, at that time, were on riboflavin status in well and chronically ill adolescents. Receiving a MS from the Ohio State University in Preventive Medicine, she did research on diagnostic radiation exposure in neonatal intensive care units. She is currently a post-doctoral fellow with the Cardiovascular Disease Training Grant.

Monika Stender is a graduate from the University of Leiden, The Netherlands. She received her doctoral degree from the University of Heidelberg, Germany and did research at GSF-Institute for Epidemiology, Munich, Germany. She is currently a post-doctoral fellow jointly with UNC and Burroughs Wellcome Company with research interests in cardiovascular epidemiology and pharmacoepidemiology.

Pam Schreiner received two MS degrees from the Iowa State University in Molecular, Cellular and Development Biology and one in Biomedical Engineering. She received her PhD from UNC, Department of Epidemiology. She is a second year cardiovascular disease epidemiology postdoc working with the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) study. Her research interests are in cardiovascular disease etiology working with apolipoproteins, homocyst(e)ine and visceral fat patterning. Last summer she was a visiting scientist at the National Public Health Institute in Helsinki, Finland working with the FINMONICA survey. She has also collaborated with the Charleston Heart Study.

If there are other post-doctoral fellows who would like to share their background and research interests with the department, please submit your information to Lesa McPherson and it will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

INFORMATIONAL TIDBITS

Medline Search Tips

Objective: to browse recent articles from a particular journal, and to view any abstract of interest.

Steps:

1. Go into UNCLE.
2. At search prompt, enter abbreviation for journal followed by ".so."; if official abbreviation is unknown, call 2-0700 to request it.
3. At search prompt, enter "l;1;im=9404" to limit (l) the articles found in search number (1) to the most recent Index Medicus batch (IM) coded (9404). The batches are coded "94" for year and "04" for month. Tapes are usually changed around the 10th of the month. If you get '0', then back up to previous batch, e.g., enter "im=9403". Press enter or type "s" to return to search prompt.
4. At search prompt, enter "2 and author-abstract" to reduce the yield to articles with abstracts available (the 2 refers to search #2). This takes a little time but for journals with lots of "letters to editor, etc.", it saves time later.

5. At search prompt, enter "d;3;b;1" to display the brief form for the first article. To browse rest of articles, press enter. When you see an article that you'd like to read the abstract, enter ".f" to see the full entry. After you read the abstract, press enter; you will continue display of brief form.
6. To exit, enter "q;q;q;q"

Example:

- ```
1_ : am-j-epidemiol.so.
2_ : l;1;im=9404
 s
3_ : 2 and author-abstract
4_ : d;3;b;1
 .f
5_ : q;q;q;q
```

If you have questions regarding UNCLE searching, please call Darrah Degnan at 966-3000 and she will be glad to assist you or put you in touch with someone who can answer your questions.

**EPIDEMIOLOGY NEWS**  
Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring 1994  
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